

# Terms of Reference – Coastal Open Space System (COSS) Advisory Committee

## 1. Role

Central Coast Council has an adopted Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Plan that will shape all activities and projects over the next four years. Council's Advisory Groups are an important mechanism for consultation, advice and feedback to Council staff on implementation and review of the Community Strategic Plan.

The role of the Coastal Open Space System (COSS) Committee (the Advisory Group) is to advise Council and staff on all matters relating to strategic biodiversity conservation land management (including the COSS) for the Central Coast.

## 2. Responsibilities

The Advisory Group is responsible for providing advice and feedback to Council and staff on:

- Providing advice and feedback to Council on the development and implementation of a revised COSS Strategy for the Central Coast including the review of the objectives.
- Championing biodiversity conservation outcomes with the broader community of the Central Coast.
- Providing advice and feedback to Council on a revised COSS Assessment process.

## 3. Membership, voting and quorum

Membership

Councillors:

Community Members:	John Andrews	Voting Member
	David Holland	Voting Member
	Deb Holloman	Voting Member
	Paul Links	Voting Member
	Barbara Wills	Voting Member
	Douglas Williamson	Voting Member

Additional Representation (non-voting):

- National Parks and Wildlife Service
- State Forest NSW
- Department of Industry - Lands
- Biodiversity Conservation Trust
- Local Land Services – Greater Sydney

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Community representatives shall be appointed by resolution of Council following advertisement for nominations. Nominations are to be in writing and will be circulated in full to Councillors for evaluation and consideration. The Advisory Group is not involved in the evaluation or selection process, this is a matter for Council.

The staff holding the following Central Coast Council positions may attend Advisory Group meetings:

- Unit Manager, Environmental Management
- Section Manager, Natural Assets and Biodiversity
- Senior Ecologist

Council officers will provide professional advice and administrative support. Employees of the Council are not subject to the direction of the Advisory Group or any members of it. Staff attendance is at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer or their delegate.

Non-staff members are appointed to the Advisory Group for the remainder of the current Council term, although membership can be altered at any time by a resolution of Council.

Membership can be withdrawn by resolution of Council.

If a member misses three consecutive meetings without apology, their membership may be withdrawn, and their position deemed vacant.

## *Casual Vacancy*

A casual vacancy is caused by the resignation or death of a member or the withdrawal of membership. To fill a casual vacancy:

- The Advisory Group staff contact will report the vacancy to the Advisory Group and then to the next available Council meeting.
- If the member was nominated as a representative of an organisation, it will be recommended that the organisation be invited to nominate a replacement member.
- If the member was nominated as an individual, the original expressions of interest will be reviewed to identify an appropriate replacement member.
- Where there are no appropriate alternate nominations, expressions of interest will be called for to replace the member.
- Where the vacancy occurs within nine months of the end of the term of the Advisory Group the vacancy will not be filled.

## *Chairperson*

The Chairperson is a Councillor.

The Chairperson is to have precedence at the meeting and shall determine the order of proceedings, generally as set out in the Agenda.

It is not necessary that the Chairperson be a member of the Advisory Group.

# Terms of Reference – Coastal Open Space System (COSS) Advisory Committee

Where the Mayor is appointed to be a delegate to an Advisory Group it is not necessary that the Mayor be the Chairperson.

Coordinator

A Central Coast Council staff position shall be nominated as Coordinator by the Chief Executive Officer or their delegate. They will be the staff member responsible for coordinating the preparation of agendas, invitations and minutes.

The Unit Manager Environmental Management shall be the Coordinator of the Coastal Open Space System (COSS) Committee.

## *Voting*

No formal voting rules apply.

As the Advisory Group has an advisory role, its recommendations are to be made by consensus. Where consensus cannot be reached, a vote may be taken at the request of the Chair. The vote will be carried by a majority of voting members. The minutes will reflect this process.

Council is the decision making body and the Advisory Group provides recommendations for consideration.

The Advisory Group may agree to allow participation in meetings through conference calls and other technology.

As no formal voting rules apply, there is no proxy voting. The Quorum for a meeting is half the non-Councillor representatives and at least two Councillors. However, the Chairperson shall use their discretion to determine if a meeting should be postponed due to insufficient members being able to attend.

## 4. Meetings

- Meetings are held quarterly
- The Chairperson has the authority to call additional meetings
- The Agenda and meeting papers will be distributed to members at least three days prior to the meeting
- Meetings will be recorded by the taking of minutes. The minutes are a record of agreed outcomes and do not necessarily record discussion

## 5. Communications and reporting

The agendas and minutes of the Advisory Group will be stored as a permanent record of Council. All agendas and minutes will be published on Council's website.

Where the Advisory Group recommends an action that is outside the delegation of staff to determine, a report will be provided to Council.

Staff will prepare the report that recommends that the Council note the minutes of the Advisory Group. Reporting of Advisory Group recommendations to Council will be reported as

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Committee Recommendations without change. Staff will also provide professional commentary on the Advisory Group’s recommendation where appropriate and provide a staff recommendation which may or may not align to that of the Group. The Council may, at its discretion, resolve to adopt some or all the Advisory Group’s recommendations and advice.

Where the Advisory Group has not recommended an action, the minutes will be reported to Council as an Information Report only.

## 6. Conduct

Members of the Advisory Group will be provided with Council’s adopted Code of Conduct. Conduct of members is expected to be consistent with the principles outlined in the Code of Conduct.

Members of the Advisory Group are not permitted to speak to the media or make representations on social media on behalf of the Advisory Group or Council unless approved by Council.

## 7. Version history

Date	Details
25 June 2018	Document adoption as per Council resolution from 25 June 2018 Ordinary Council Meeting
23 September 2019	Membership updated as per Council resolution from 23 September 2019
11 November 2019	Quorum updated as per Council resolution from 11 November 2019 Ordinary Council Meeting.
23 March 2021	Meeting frequency updated as per revised Advisory Group formats adopted at 23 March 2021 Ordinary Council Meeting.
9 August 2022 (this version)	Membership references updated as per Council resolution from 14 September 2021 Ordinary Council Meeting.